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brought out under the editorial supervision of the Professor of Chemistry in Harvard College, with much assiduity and care. We are told, that many errors of the press, that are found in the English edition, have been corrected. The numerical estimates and calculations have all been revised, and some pretty essential corrections made in them. One of these, we have already noticed, in which the error more than doubled the amount of the result. Now, although we have not attached a very high degree of consequence to these calculations, as sustaining Professor Liebig's peculiar views in Physiology, we do esteem them of great value as simple expressions of interesting facts. As records of such facts they will be preserved. They will be introduced into systems of physiology, and become the ground work of arguments and reasonings. It is, therefore, of great importance, that they should correctly express the truth.

It is not necessary for us to enter into the controversy between the Cambridge and the New York editions. In our last number, we discussed at large the question of a national copyright. We need do no more now, than to allude to this case, as another striking illustration of the urgent necessity for some protection to authors abroad, to enable them to present their works to American readers, in a manner that shall be just to their reputation and satisfactory to their feelings.

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ART. VIII. — *The Fountain, and other Poems*; by WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT. New York and London: Wiley & Putnam. 1842. 12mo. pp. 100.

WE have no intention of entering upon a general examination of Mr. Bryant's poetical character. His name is classical in the literature of the language. Wherever English poetry is read and loved, his poems are known by heart. Collections of poetry, elegant extracts, schoolbooks, "National Readers," and the like, draw largely upon his pieces. Among American poets his name stands, if not the very first, at least among the two or three foremost. Some of his pieces are perhaps greater favorites with the reading public, than any others written in the United States. His "Thanatopsis," for example, is universally regarded as admirable in conception and exquisite in execution. With all thoughtful persons,

that poem is enthusiastically remembered. Its rich and solemn melody, its almost Miltonic rhythm, its majestic imagery, its grave and impressive moral, fill the mind, move the heart, and stamp themselves for ever on the memory.

Mr. Bryant, during a long career of authorship, has written but comparatively little; but that little is of untold price; *ὀλίγον τε φίλον τε*,—little, but precious and dear. What exquisite taste, what a delicate ear for the music of poetical language, what a fine and piercing sense of the beauties of nature, down to the minutest and most evanescent things! He walks forth into the fields and forests, and not a green or rosy tint, not a flower, or herb, or tree, not a tiny leaf or gossamer tissue, not a strange or familiar plant, escapes his vigilant glance. The naturalist is not keener in searching out the science of nature, than he in detecting all its poetical aspects, effects, analogies, and contrasts. To him, the landscape is a speaking and teaching page. He sees its pregnant meaning, and all its hidden relations to the life of man. For him, the shadow and sunshine, that chase each other in swift rivalry over the plain, are suggestive of deep meaning and touching comparisons. For him, the breath of evening and of morning have an articulate voice. To him, the song of birds is a symbol of that deeper song of joy and thankfulness, that ascends for ever from the heart of man to the Giver of every good. To him, the ocean utters its solemn hymns, and he can well interpret them to others.

What a beautiful gift is this! Here is a man, whose life is cast among the stern realities of the world, who has thrown himself into the foremost line of what he deems the battle for human rights, who wages a fierce war with political principles opposed to his own, who deals with wrath, and dips his pen daily in bitterness and hate, who pours out from a mind, fertile with thought and glowing with passion, torrents of invective, in language eloquent with the deepest convictions of the heart, and keen as the blade of Damascus; yet able to turn at will from this storm, and strife, and agony, to the smiling fields of poetry, where not a sound of the furious din with which he was but just now surrounded, strikes upon the ear; yet delighting to still the tumult of party conflict, and for a time to cherish those broad and mighty sympathies, which bind man to man and nation to nation, in one universal brotherhood of heart. We gaze with wonder on the change

of mood, and can scarce believe the poet and the politician to be the same. But so it is ; and happy is it, that the scorching stream of lava-passion, which the central fires of politics pour over the fields of life, may be bordered by luxuriant verdure, gemmed with flowers of exquisite hues and richest fragrance ; and every man who loves the muse, and longs to see the graces and charities of letters and refinement shedding their delights far and wide over the rugged scenes of American life, will thank the poet-politician for teaching the often forgotten lesson, that there is, even in a republic, something better than the passions which fret their little hour in the columns of newspapers, and then pass from the minds of men for ever.

We believe nearly all the pieces, that make up this little volume, have appeared in print already ; but their collection will be acceptable to the admirers of Mr. Bryant's poetical genius. They are carefully thought and written, like his other productions ; they are the distilled essence of years of observation, reflection, feeling, and passion. We find here the same familiar and affectionate recognition of natural objects, the same knowledge of their qualities, properties, and aspects, the same power of drawing from them illustrations and moralities, which thoughtful readers have admired in the other volumes. Mr. Bryant intimates, that some of these pieces are fragments of a long poem which has been several years in preparation, and which the public may one day see. We fervently hope he may find time from his multitudinous cares to execute his design ; for we are sure it cannot fail to be an honor to the poetical literature of the age, and an addition even to his own great fame.

How characteristic of Bryant's rich and peculiar vein of thought, is the following passage, taken from "The Fountain."

"This tangled thicket on the bank above  
Thy basin, how thy waters keep it green !  
For thou dost feed the roots of the wild vine  
That trails all over it, and to the twigs  
Ties fast her clusters. There the spice-bush lifts  
Her leafy lances ; the viburnum there,  
Paler of foliage, to the sun holds up  
Her circlet of green berries. In and out  
The chipping sparrow, in her coat of brown,  
Steals silently, lest I should mark her nest.

“Not such thou wert of yore, ere yet the axe  
Had smitten the old woods. Then hoary trunks  
Of oak, and plane, and hickory o’er thee held  
A mighty canopy. When April winds  
Grew soft, the maple burst into a flush  
Of scarlet flowers. The tulip-tree, high up,  
Opened, in airs of June, her multitude  
Of golden chalices to humming birds  
And silken-winged insects of the sky.

“Frail wood-plants clustered round thy edge in Spring.  
The liverleaf put forth her sister blooms  
Of faintest blue. Here the quick-footed wolf,  
Passing to lap thy waters, crushed the flower  
Of Sanguinaria, from whose brittle stem  
The red drops fell like blood. The deer too, left  
Her delicate foot-print in the soft, moist mould,  
And on the fallen leaves. The slow-paced bear,  
In such a sultry summer noon as this,  
Stopped at thy stream, and drank, and leaped across.

“But thou hast histories that stir the heart  
With deeper feeling ; while I look on thee  
They rise before me. I behold the scene  
Hoary again with forests ; I behold  
The Indian warrior, whom a hand unseen  
Has smitten with his death-wound in the woods,  
Creep slowly to thy well-known rivulet,  
And slake his death-thirst. Hark, that quick fierce cry  
That rends the utter silence ; ’t is the whoop  
Of battle, and a throng of savage men,  
With naked arms and faces stained like blood,  
Fill the green wilderness ; the long bare arms  
Are heaved aloft, bows twang and arrows stream ;  
Each makes a tree his shield, and every tree  
Sends forth its arrow. Fierce the fight and short,  
As is the whirlwind. Soon the conquerors  
And conquered vanish, and the dead remain  
Gashed horribly with tomahawks. The woods  
Are still again, the frightened bird comes back  
And plumes her wings ; but thy sweet waters run  
Crimson with blood. Then, as the sun goes down,  
Amid the deepening twilight I descry  
Figures of men, that crouch and creep unheard,  
And bear away the dead. The next day’s shower  
Shall wash the tokens of the fight away.

“I look again, — a hunter’s lodge is built,  
With poles and boughs, beside thy crystal well,

While the meek autumn stains the woods with gold,  
And sheds his golden sunshine. To the door  
The red man slowly drags the enormous bear  
Slain in the chestnut thicket, or flings down  
The deer from his strong shoulders. Shaggy fells  
Of wolf and cougar hang upon the walls,  
And loud the blackeyed Indian maidens laugh,  
That gather, from the rustling heaps of leaves,  
The hickory's white nuts, and the dark fruit  
That falls from the gray butternut's long boughs.

"So centuries passed by, and still the woods  
Blossomed in spring, and reddened when the year  
Grew chill, and glistened in the frozen rains  
Of winter, till the white man swung the axe  
Beside thee, — signal of a mighty change.  
Then all around was heard the crash of trees,  
Trembling awhile and rushing to the ground, —  
The low of ox, and shouts of men who fired  
The brushwood, or who tore the earth with ploughs.  
The grain sprang thick and tall, and hid in green  
The blackened hill-side ; ranks of spiky maize  
Rose like a host embattled ; the buckwheat  
Whitened broad acres, sweetening with its flowers  
The August wind. White cottages were seen,  
With rose-trees at the windows ; barns, from which  
Swelled loud and shrill the cry of chanticleer ;  
Pastures, where rolled and neighed the lordly horse,  
And white flocks browsed and bleated. A rich turf  
Of grasses, brought from far, o'ercrept thy bank,  
Spotted with the white clover. Blue-eyed girls  
Brought pails, and dipped them in thy crystal pool ;  
And children, ruddy-cheeked and flaxen-haired,  
Gathered the glistening cowslip from thy edge.  
"Since then, what steps have trod thy border ! Here  
On thy green bank, the woodman of the swamp  
Has laid his axe, the reaper of the hill  
His sickle, as they stooped to taste thy stream.  
The sportsman, tired with wandering in the still  
September noon, has bathed his heated brow  
In thy cool current. Shouting boys, let loose  
For a wild holyday, have quaintly shaped  
Into a cup the folded linden leaf,  
And dipped thy sliding crystal. From the wars  
Returning, the plumed soldier by thy side  
Has sat, and mused how pleasant 't were to dwell

In such a spot, and be as free as thou,  
 And move for no man's bidding more. At eve,  
 When thou wert crimson with the crimson sky,  
 Lovers have gazed upon thee, and have thought  
 Their mingled lives should flow as peacefully  
 And brightly as thy waters. Here the sage,  
 Gazing into thy self-replenished depth,  
 Has seen eternal order circumscribe  
 And bind the motions of eternal change,  
 And from the gushing of thy simple fount  
 Has reasoned to the mighty universe." — pp. 12 – 17.

The poem called "The Winds," has also fine descriptive passages, and striking analogical references to human life. "The Green Mountain Boys" is a spirited song, suggested by the surprise and capture of the British at Ticonderoga, by the Vermont soldiers, under the command of Ethan Allen. "The Death of Schiller," suggested by a fact mentioned in the biographies of that great poet, namely, his being seized with a sudden desire to travel over foreign countries just before he expired, is not equal to the other pieces in the volume. Some of the lines are hard and unmusical; some end in a way to break the chain of thought, and to grate harshly on the ear; and some of the expressions are incongruous.

"The peering Chinese, and the dark  
 False Malay, uttering gentle words."

The rhythmical pause after *dark* roughly breaks off the epithet from the word to which it belongs, and hurts the music of the passage. We are aware such things occur often in the poets; but they are seldom found in Bryant, and should never be, though Rhythm is a hard master, and poets cannot always do as they would, under his despotism.

"Shone and awoke that strong desire  
 For love and *knowledge reached* not here,  
 Till death set free his soul of fire,  
 To plunge into its fitting sphere."

A pair of such unpronounceable words as *knowledge* and *reached*, should never be allowed to go in company. Each by itself requires to be surrounded and covered with half a dozen of the softest and most liquid syllables to make it conveniently manageable; to pronounce them both at once is enough to make the firmest jaw creak like a rusty hinge. Is

it quite proper to talk about a soul *plunging* into a *sphere*? Is there not here a jumbling of the literal and metaphorical, which dims the brightness of the poet's conception? When we speak of plunging, we naturally think of something *liquid*, either literally or metaphorically so, into which the plunge is literally or metaphorically made. Thus we say of a debauchee, perhaps, *that he plunges into dissipation*, meaning thereby, that he goes, as it were, head foremost into a stream which bears him swiftly to his destruction. Connecting this liquid notion with the "soul of fire," the image presented to the imagination is rather that of a spirit extinguishing itself by taking a plunge, than of a soul suddenly emancipated from the thralldom of earth.

Having satisfied our critical conscience with the above nice specimen of fault-finding, we proceed, with better heart, to despatch the remainder of the volume. We give the whole of the exquisite little poem on "Life."

" LIFE.

- " Oh life ! I breathe thee in the breeze,  
I feel thee bounding in my veins,  
I see thee in these stretching trees,  
These flowers, this still rock's mossy stains.
- " This stream of odors flowing by  
From clover-field and clumps of pine,  
This music, thrilling all the sky,  
From all the morning birds, are thine.
- " Thou fill'st with joy this little one,  
That leaps and shouts beside me here,  
Where Isar's clay-white rivulets run  
Through the dark woods like frightened deer.
- " Ah ! must thy mighty breath, that wakes  
Insect and bird, and flower and tree,  
From the low trodden dust, and makes  
Their daily gladness, pass from me,—
- " Pass, pulse by pulse, till o'er the ground  
These limbs, now strong, shall creep with pain,  
And this fair world of sight and sound  
Seem fading into night again ?
- " The things, oh LIFE ! thou quickenest, all  
Strive upwards toward the broad bright sky,



- Upward and outward, and they fall  
Back to earth's bosom when they die.
- " All that have borne the touch of death,  
All that shall live, lie mingled there,  
Beneath that veil of bloom and breath,  
That living zone 'twixt earth and air.
- " There lies my chamber dark and still,  
The atoms trampled by my feet  
There wait, to take the place I fill  
In the sweet air and sunshine sweet.
- " Well, I have had my turn, have been  
Raised from the darkness of the clod,  
And for a glorious moment seen  
The brightness of the skirts of God ;
- " And knew the light within my breast,  
Though wavering oftentimes and dim,  
The power, the will, that never rest,  
And cannot die, were all from him.
- " Dear child ! I know that thou wilt grieve,  
To see me taken from thy love,  
Wilt seek my grave at Sabbath eve,  
And weep, and scatter flowers above.
- " Thy little heart will soon be healed,  
And being shall be bliss, till thou  
To younger forms of life must yield  
The place thou fill'st with beauty now.
- " When we descend to dust again,  
Where will the final dwelling be,  
Of Thought and all its memories then,  
My love for thee, and thine for me ? "

— pp. 37 – 40.

" A Presentiment," is short, but beautiful and striking ; we should quote it, but that we perceive it is immediately followed by a piece called " The Future Life," which, for refinement of thought, tenderness of sentiment, and pathos of language, is one of the best things Bryant has ever written. Are we wrong in supposing, that its moving strain of feeling was inspired by something nearer home than the poet's creative imagination ?

## "THE FUTURE LIFE.

- "How shall I know thee in the sphere which keeps  
The disembodied spirits of the dead,  
When all of thee that time could wither sleeps  
And perishes among the dust we tread ?
- "For I shall feel the sting of ceaseless pain,  
If there I meet thy gentle presence not ;  
Nor hear the voice I love, nor read again  
In thy serenest eyes the tender thought.
- "Will not thy own meek heart demand me there ?  
That heart whose fondest throbs to me were given ?  
My name on earth was ever in thy prayer,  
Shall it be banished from thy tongue in heaven ?
- "In meadows fanned by heaven's life-breathing wind,  
In the resplendence of that glorious sphere,  
And larger movements of the unfettered mind,  
Wilt thou forget the love that joined us here ?
- "The love that lived through all the stormy past,  
And meekly with my harsher nature bore,  
And deeper grew, and tenderer to the last,  
Shall it expire with life, and be no more ?
- "A happier lot than mine, and larger light,  
Await thee there ; for thou hast bowed thy will  
In cheerful homage to the rule of right,  
And lovest all, and renderest good for ill.
- "For me, the sordid cares in which I dwell,  
Shrink and consume the heart, as heat the scroll ;  
And wrath hath left its scar, — that fire of hell  
Has left its frightful scar upon my soul.
- "Yet, though thou wear'st the glory of the sky,  
Wilt thou not keep the same beloved name,  
The same fair thoughtful brow, and gentle eye,  
Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same ?
- "Shalt thou not teach me, in that calmer home,  
The wisdom that I learned so ill in this, —  
The wisdom which is love, — till I become  
Thy fit companion in that land of bliss ? "

— pp. 47 – 49.

There is not a piece in the remainder of the volume that has not striking poetical beauties. But we pass them over,

and close our notice with the admirable lines under the title of

“AN EVENING REVERIE, FROM AN UNFINISHED POEM.

“The summer day is closed,—the sun is set.  
Well they have done their office, those bright hours,  
The latest of whose train goes softly out  
In the red West. The green blade of the ground  
Has risen, and herds have cropped it; the young twig  
Has spread its plaited tissues to the sun;  
Flowers of the garden and the waste have blown  
And withered; seeds have fallen upon the soil,  
From bursting cells, and in their graves await  
Their resurrection. Insects from the pools  
Have filled the air awhile with humming wings,  
That now are still for ever; painted moths  
Have wandered the blue sky, and died again;  
The mother-bird hath broken, for her brood,  
Their prison shell, or shoved them from the nest,  
Plumed for their earliest flight. In bright alcoves,  
In woodland cottages with barky walls,  
In noisome cells of the tumultuous town,  
Mothers have clasped with joy the new-born babe.  
Graves by the lonely forest, by the shore  
Of rivers and of ocean, by the ways  
Of the thronged city, have been hollowed out,  
And filled, and closed. This day hath parted friends  
That ne’er before were parted; it hath knit  
New friendships; it hath seen the maiden plight  
Her faith, and trust her peace to him who long  
Hath wooed; and it hath heard, from lips which late  
Were eloquent of love, the first harsh word,  
That told the wedded one her peace was flown.  
Farewell to the sweet sunshine! One glad day  
Is added now to Childhood’s merry days,  
And one calm day to those of quiet Age.  
Still the fleet hours run on; and as I lean,  
Amid the thickening darkness, lamps are lit,  
By those who watch the dead, and those who twine  
Flowers for the bride. The mother from the eyes  
Of her sick infant shades the painful light,  
And sadly listens to his quick-drawn breath.

“Oh thou great Movement of the Universe,  
Or Change, or Flight of Time,—for ye are one!  
That bearest, silently, this visible scene

Into night's shadow and the streaming rays  
Of starlight, whither art thou bearing me ?  
I feel the mighty current sweep me on,  
Yet know not whither. Man foretells afar  
The courses of the stars ; the very hour  
He knows when they shall darken or grow bright ;  
Yet doth the eclipse of Sorrow and of Death  
Come unforewarned. Who next, of those I love,  
Shall pass from life, or, sadder yet, shall fall  
From virtue ? Strife with foes, or bitterer strife  
With friends, or shame and general scorn of men, —  
Which who can bear ? — or the fierce rack of pain,  
Lie they within my path ? Or shall the years  
Push me, with soft and inoffensive pace,  
Into the stilly twilight of my age ?  
Or do the portals of another life  
Even now, while I am glorying in my strength,  
Impend around me ? Oh ! beyond that bourne,  
In the vast cycle of being which begins  
At that broad threshold, with what fairer forms  
Shall the great law of change and progress clothe  
Its workings ? Gently, — so have good men taught, —  
Gently, and without grief, the old shall glide  
Into the new ; the eternal flow of things,  
Like a bright river of the fields of heaven,  
Shall journey onward in perpetual peace." — pp. 77 – 80.

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ART. IX. — *Forest Life*, by the Author of "A New Home." In Two Volumes. New York : C. S. Francis & Co. 1842. 12mo. pp. 250 and 234.

THE first book of the sprightly and clever writer, to whom we are indebted for these sketches of Western life, placed her at once among our best female authors. It had a vigor, a racy flavor, an originality and truth, which we do not often find ; it was written in a nervous and graphic English style, that showed no common power over the resources of the language. Though embodying no connected story, in which characters and passions are elaborately developed, it abounded in glimpses of original, lifelike characters on every page.